

DEC 22 1970

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TO:      The Secretary of State  
          The Secretary of Defense  
          The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Follow-on Study of Strategy Toward the Indian Ocean

As a follow-on to the study developed in response to NSSM 104, the President has directed that a further study be prepared outlining alternative U.S. strategies through 1975 for dealing with the increase in Soviet activities in the Indian Ocean area. Whereas the NSSM 104 study concentrated on Soviet naval threats and friendly naval force and basing alternatives, this study is to provide the broader framework necessary for judging a naval response in the context of other possible strategies.

This study should provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the political significance in the Indian Ocean context of the Soviet naval presence? In each case, attention should be given to the effect of the passage of time.

--What states in the area are more susceptible and less susceptible to this sort of Soviet influence?

--In what specific ways in these states could the Soviet Union be expected to enhance its influence by increasing its naval activity?

--In what parts of the area could local tensions develop to the point of (1) tempting Soviet exploitation and (2) producing local invitation for Soviet involvement?

--In what specific ways in these states could an increase in Soviet naval presence be expected to work to Soviet disadvantage?

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--In these states, how does Soviet naval activity compare in effectiveness with military aid, economic assistance, political support and local Communist parties as devices for increasing Soviet influence?

--Does Soviet political influence increase commensurately with increases in Soviet naval activity?

2. What is the military and political significance of the Soviet naval deployments in the Indian Ocean viewed in the context of global Soviet naval strategy and overseas deployments elsewhere?

--What are the principal views of the relationship between Soviet naval and political strategy?

--Against the background of the global context, what seem to be Soviet objectives in the Indian Ocean?

--In what Indian Ocean states is the Soviet interest greatest and least?

3. What is the political significance of Chinese Communist activities, e. g. ICBM testing and political relations with littoral states?

4. What are the U. S. options in setting a strategy toward this area? The NSSM 104 study outlined options for a naval response. The purpose of this study would be to develop a political framework for the naval response.

--In which states are U. S. and allied interests greatest and least?

--What activities other than naval are potentially useful devices in countering Soviet influence? How do these differ in various littoral states or regions?

--In what ways can Soviet activities be made more costly politically for the Soviets?

--What U. S. responses are most likely to encourage or discourage response by allied governments?

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-- What U.S.-allied responses are more and less likely to elicit hostile and friendly responses from the indigenous nations?

-- What is the appropriate political posture for the U.S. to take with the states in the area in connection with each strategy option?

5. If there were to be a U.S. and allied naval response to the Soviet buildup, which is the more appropriate timing for the U.S. and allied response? Is it better to move quickly to try to pre-empt further Soviet buildup or to keep pace with the Soviet buildup?

This study should be prepared by an NSC Ad Hoc Group to be chaired by a representative of the Secretary of State. It should be submitted by January 22, 1971.

Henry A. Kissinger

cc: Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

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HHSaunders:tmt 12/18/70

INFORMATION

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December 18, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Henry A. Kissinger  
SUBJECT: Indian Ocean Studies

(Signed) HK

As you know from your briefing memo for Prime Minister Heath's visit, we have been engaged in a joint study with the British of the Soviet threat in the Indian Ocean. The purpose of this memo is simply to inform you of the state of that work and the follow-on to it.

The main British point has been that a collection of recent Soviet actions seem to add up to a new Soviet emphasis on establishing a presence in the Indian Ocean:

- Soviet naval ships are increasingly active.
- The Soviet air presence in the UAR could reach into the Red Sea and Western Indian Ocean as well as into the Mediterranean.
- They have acquired access to port facilities in a general way through fisheries agreements with 13 countries.
- They have the potential in Aden and Mauritius for developing over the long term arrangements such as they now have in Alexandria.

The initial U.S. study -- on which we have compared notes with one of Prime Minister Heath's principal planners -- concentrated on the Soviet naval threat and possible U.S. and allied naval responses. When the Senior Review Group discussed this first study, it was decided that a further paper was needed to put the naval response into the context of possible broader diplomatic and economic responses. This follow-on study has now been ordered via the attached directive. As soon as it is completed, recommendations will be sent to you.

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No Objection to Declassification in Full 2013/09/04 : LOC-HAK-10-5-16-7

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ACTION  
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December 18, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: Richard T. Kennedy  
Harold H. Saunders  
K. Wayne Smith  
Helmut Sonnenfeldt

SUBJECT: Follow-on Indian Ocean Study

Attached is a NSSM ordering the follow-on study which you requested at the SRG discussion of the Indian Ocean last week. It was drafted by Saunders and incorporates the suggestions of all your staff with responsibilities in this area.

The NSSM is built around the four questions you put at the SRG.

The responsibility for this study is shifted to an NSC Ad Hoc Group in State in order now to cast the broader political net you have asked for. Effectively this NSSM will give the job to Cargo's shop--presumably to Tom Thornton who produced the political input for the past study.

At tabs are:

Tab A: The draft NSSM for your signature.

Tab B: A memo reporting this exercise to the President (including Thomson's presentation to the SRG).

Tab C: A final summary of his views which Thomson left.

This is being sent to you in the immediate wake of the Heath visit so you can review it in the light of those talks and get it out promptly if it is consistent with what was agreed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That you sign the NSSM at Tab A.
2. That you send the memo at Tab B to the President if you think it desirable. Much of this was already reported in the memo for the Heath visit.

CONCURRENCES: Marshall Wright

John Holdridge

Jeanne Davis

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The Indian Ocean Area - Soviet and Chinese Capabilities,  
Intentions and Opportunities

Soviet Capabilities at Present

The Soviet Squadron in the Indian Ocean, though it cannot always be at operational readiness, has the capability of being the most powerful naval force in the area. With their facilities at airfields in the UAR the Russians can fly reconnaissance, air cover and strike missions over the Red Sea, Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. The port facilities which they have acquired, e.g. in Aden and through fisheries agreements with 13 countries in the area, could help to maintain their military presence. Aid agreements and political support have given the Russians additional influence in a number of countries, e.g. India and PRSY.

With these resources the Russians are capable of giving aid and comfort to friendly governments or opposition parties in such a way as to intimidate their domestic opponents and to inhibit Western intervention. They have also a modest capability to interfere with the large amount of Western shipping in the area. But the most important capability they have so far achieved is a foot in the door, that is to say the capability of expanding their power and influence so that it might come to rival that which Britain formerly exercised in the area.

Soviet Potential Capabilities

2. With the Suez Canal open and Alexandria available as a naval base, it will be easier and cheaper for the Russians to maintain their presence and operational efficiency in the Indian Ocean and hence their naval superiority there. They will also be able to reinforce it more quickly. If they were

to acquire a naval and air base within the area, e.g. Aden, their operational readiness and power would be still more enhanced. They would be better able to shadow Western surface forces in the area: they would also be better able to threaten Western shipping and they could effectively deny certain parts of the sea to it: they would have a considerable capability to intervene in internal security situations in favour of their friends: they might thus be able to secure pro-Russian governments in such countries as Mauritius, PRSY and Somalia. Finally they would be able to place considerable inhibitions on Western freedom of action while at the same time increasing their own options.

Chinese Activities and Intentions

3. In the next 5 years the Chinese will not make much headway in the Indian Ocean area as a whole, although they will make a major effort to secure the success of the Tanzam Railway, will take a close interest in Pakistan, India, Ceylon and PRSY, and will enter into relations with nearly all the countries in the area. Just as the Russians have an anti-Chinese motive and will be spurred on by Chinese activities, so the Chinese have an anti-Russian incentive. The objectives of the two countries are different and the Chinese will probably be more interested than the Russians in creating political instability and fragmentation in the area. China will probably not be in a great hurry, if only because her resources are so comparatively slender.

Soviet Intentions and Opportunities

4. The Russians are acquisitive of power for its own sake. They think of it like money in the bank - if you have it people respect you. You can always use it if you want - or not use it. It gives you freedom of choice. The Russians are determined to be a super power on the American scale. They intend to have their views taken into account when anything important is done anywhere. They want a finger in every pie. Little by little they intend to accustom the world to this situation and to the reality of a Soviet military presence. They will exploit the freedom of the air and of the sea. They will probe Western reactions and seek opportunities to enlarge Soviet influence. These are the main intentions underlying the expanding Soviet power in the Indian Ocean area. At present the Russians are operating on an experimental basis. If the results look good they will press further.

5. Soviet policy is opportunistic in the sense that it is looking for opportunities to enlarge Russian power and to damage Western and Chinese interests. It is also opportunistic in the sense that the Russians are prepared to deal differently with the different parts of the area. The Soviet leadership (as apart from the Soviet Navy) probably do not see the area as a unit. Despite the growing amount of Soviet merchant shipping in the Indian Ocean the Russians do not have a very strong defensive reason for exercising military power in the area. The defence of the homeland is the first priority of Soviet defence policy and at present the security of the USSR is not directly menaced from the Indian Ocean area. Thus as things stand

the Indian Ocean area does not have a very high place in Soviet military priorities. The gains they seek there are primarily political. Their first priority in the area may be to drive the West out of the Arab countries and to acquire the use of local naval and air facilities, leading on eventually to the establishment of subservient governments. Their second priority may be to gain as much control as possible over every aspect of Indian policy and in this they will not neglect Pakistan and Ceylon. Their third priority may be to acquire the use of naval and air facilities and to encourage the formation of friendly governments in other strategic countries e.g. Mauritius and Somalia. But in trying to recreate for themselves something approaching the former British dominance in the area, the Russians will not be bound by pre-determined priorities. They will probe where there seems to be weakness and take opportunities as they find them, for example, social and political instability in Mauritius, or black/white tension in Southern Africa. They will be on the lookout to create opportunities both by overt and also by covert means, e.g. to supplant the Chinese in Tanzania or to overthrow the Sultan of Muscat and Oman. With some luck and depending on the Western response, the Russians could before long be a highly influential power in the area; they might well dominate critical parts of it. They are already well on the road to this goal.

December, 1970